

**OPPONENT'S RECOMMENDATION FOR THE MASTER'S THESIS:**

Attachment to the state magister's examination report.

**STUDENT: AVRAMOVA Tinka**

**Branch of study: MA DOT**

**Opponent: MgA. Branislav Mazúch**

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"Crash and Burn: Strategies to Access Performers' Authenticity on Stage" That is the title of the Master's Thesis of Tinka Avramova, that is into Czech translated as "Zničit a Spálit: Strategie k dosažení autentičnosti performerů na jevišti". But to be honest, after reading the Thesis I have to disagree with the translation, because it misses the main point of the work: the risk that Tinka Avramova takes to achieve the goal: the Authenticity on Stage. So I would prefer subject oriented version of the title "Zřítit se a shořet: Strategie k dosažení autentičnosti performerů na jevišti" instead of the object one, especially when one of last sentences of the Thesis is: "It takes courage to crash and burn, courage to make the leap."

In the abstract of the Thesis Tinka Avramova writes "The author outlines and describes her approaches and methods of working with performers to achieve authenticity and recapitulates these methods' discovery and development. Based on her personal findings, the author mostly uses personal experience and knowledge; she also references and discusses other contemporary theatre companies that use similar approaches concerning her own work." The author does so in very simple, authentic and transparent style. Tinka is able with the word to provide us through the uneasy and sometimes even risky landscape of her theatre experiments. Her narrative is linear, clear and in very informally way recalls memories on seen/experienced performances directed by her.

Tinka Avramova divides the work into two parts. In the first half she starts with basic definitions of the main phenomenons crucial for her directing method: Authenticity, Performer, Personal Blocks, Originality, Stupidity, Bullshit and Píčovina. Then she describes so called Early Works and later The Identity Series. In the second part of the Thesis she describes her Approaches and Methods: Creative Process & Rehearsals. Failure & Embarrassment, Tasking & Improvisation, Storytelling, Movement & Choreography and finally (Un)Finished Performances, (Un)Defined Structures and (Un)Repeatable Experiences.

As we see in the subtitle, the main focus of the author is on the AUTHENTICITY. „When I speak of authenticity, I am referring to the performer's performance, their presence, and their relationship with the material they bring to the stage. Authenticity is the truth behind the performers' words and actions, their honesty with themselves and the audience. Is the performer aiming to be authentic to their "true self" in the moment of

performance? Are they acting upon and reacting to what they feel in that particular moment, rather than pretending or suppressing their instinct and intuition? How are the performers presenting themselves and what is actually there?" (page 7)

The work of Tinka Avramova is based on the personality of performer. "My creative process is heavily based on my relationships with the performers I work with. I prioritize each individual and adapt my way of working to accommodate each person. The work is very personal and based on the materiality of each performer." Later the author writes: "I work empathetically. It is not an easy approach, and oftentimes it can be extremely tasking both mentally and emotionally. However, I believe that this is the best way to work with the performers, primarily due to my desire for authentic performances." And on the page 50: "Inspiration comes from recognizing and exploring my performers. I start with the personal and find overarching themes or connections, but the basis of all the material comes from each performer, myself included." Without the performer wouldn't be any performance of Tinka Avramova, and maybe there wouldn't be even any Tinka. Tinka needs performer.

Question No.1: Imagine this board is your new group of performers, that was introduced to you by Disk Theatre right now. You are asked to make performance with us. Some of us do you know better, some less, some maybe not at all. How would you start your first rehearsal?

Question No.2: When you write about The Rockets and Bombs, you say: "I told my performers that I was interested in how the performance would change from show to show and that our main goal was not to have a finished product from day one, but that the whole experience of performing until the last show was our target." Have you already reflected this experience with performance? Have you come to a conclusion, that the intention of your project was fulfilled?

Question No.3 "My role as a director is to create the space for the performers to find authenticity for themselves. I establish an environment of love and trust for working together, but the outcome is not in my control. I cannot be authentic for them. Each performer must make the leap. It is not about me creating authenticity, but rather creating a space where the potential for these moments can happen." (page 91) Authentic is the opening moment with all the performers, authentic is the way of dialog you have with them, everything you do is focused on authenticity, so what exactly you mean, when you say "I cannot be authentic for them."? Don't you think that primarily you have to be the most authentic in the very beginning, on the starting point of the rehearsing process?

I recommend – ~~don't recommend~~ the thesis for the defense.

Date: 13th of September, 2020

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